



**Hunter Valley Operations (HVO)
Community Consultative Committee (CCC) Meeting
Wednesday 28 August 2024 at 1:30 p.m.**



Attendance

Chairperson

Dr. Colin Gellatly Independent Chair HVO CCC

Community Representatives

Brian Atfield Community Representative

Janelle Wenham Community Representative

Jeanie Hayes Community Representative

Michael Wellard Community Representative

Singleton Council

CR. Sue George Singleton Council

Company Representatives

Andrew Speechly Manager Environment & Community

Nic McLaughlin Environment & Community Officer

Madison Freeman Environment & Community Graduate

Jason Martin Approvals Manager – HVO Continuation Project

Apologies

Dave Foster General Manager

Todd Mills Community Representative

Di Gee Community Representative

Neville Hodgkinson Community Representative

Minutes

Sarah Purser

1. **Welcome**, Col opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance. Andrew ran through housekeeping and emergency procedures. **Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners**; *"We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land where we meet today and pay respect to Elders, past, present and future"*.
2. **Apologies**; Advised and recorded.
3. **Declaration of pecuniary interests/conflicts of interest**; *Standing*; Col and Sarah are engaged by HVO to provide the respective roles of Independent Chairperson and meeting minute taking. CR. Sue George is President of the Singleton Neighbourhood Centre, her son works for the Environment Protection Authority (EPA). Jeannie is a permanent employee at Muswellbrook Shire Council.
4. **Correspondence**

10/5/2024	Glencore Apprentice Programme sent to CCC members.
25/5/2024	Finalised / accepted Minutes from the Meeting held 7 February 2024.
5/7/2024	Draft minutes sent for CCC member comment.
5/7/2024	Acceptance of minutes without change received from CR. Sue George.
7/8/2024	HVO CCC Terms of Reference document and link to HVO website, along with details of upcoming Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue (UHMD) Community Forum to be held Tuesday 29 October 2024.
5. **Confirmation of the previous Meeting's Minutes**; Col called for formal approval of the Minutes for the Meeting held 8 May 2024 and the CCC confirmed their acceptance. The CCC Meeting Minutes are available on HVO's public website and can be accessed on-line via [Documents Hunter Valley Operations \(hvo.com.au\)](https://www.hvo.com.au)

6. Matters Arising

Action Arising from the previous Meeting; HVO CCC Terms of Reference.

- ✓ Circulated to members and available on HVO's website

7. Company Reports | Update on Hunter Valley Operations

Operations Update

West Pit; The Howick Coal Preparation Plant (CPP) has recommenced with coal being hauled to the Newdell Load Point. The wall being constructed in West Pit to allow for the proposed Tailings Storage Facility (TSF) is near completion. Andrew identified where mining operations are working in the benches and confirmed that Mitchell pit is still within that footprint.

Vegetation Mulching and Sediment Dam Construction; Andrew identified where HVO are conducting vegetation mulching and the construction of a sediment dam in advance of mining. There will be intermittent road closures whilst HVO mulch along Lemington Road that will be coordinated with blasting.

Cheshunt; Andrew identified where works are being conducted, on the most part the outer dumps are down below in the pit. Brian queried how long Cheshunt pit is open and Andrew responded the approval runs to 2030. Andrew noted that South Pit will get tied into the Continuation Project and whilst there will be no change to how HVO mines in that area, there will be an extended timeframe to work in concert with HVO North.

Environment

Complaints; There had been no complaints in the period 4 May to 28 August 2024.

Rehabilitation

Andrew identified where 18 hectares of rehabilitation have been seeded YTD at Riverview, West Pit and Barry's. With regard to planned rehabilitation; shaping works have been completed and drainage works have commenced on the East TSF landform. Shaping has also commenced at Cheshunt Geofluv with topsoiling anticipated to commence in September. This work is progressing well with seeding for both of these areas anticipated for November / December 2024.

Rehabilitation Maintenance

Over 300 hectares of rehabilitation maintenance has been completed YTD. This includes weed spraying, erosion repair and mulching. Works have been progressing on the Carrington GMD area with final boom spraying occurring and seeding of final land use expected to occur during September. Works at the WOOP dump are awaiting approval from Crown Lands to recommence.

Rehabilitation Annual Aerial Seeding

Aerial seeding of a pasture seed mix and fertiliser was undertaken on 28 May. 395 hectares were covered in West Pit, Carrington Pit, Cheshunt Pit, Riverview Pit, as well as a trial on the North Void TSF. Andrew explained this is not rehabilitation but rather to get cover on to aid dust suppression and improve visual amenity. Andrew noted the conditions had been excellent with rain prior to and after the aerial seeding resulting in a good strike. Andrew identified where seed was germinating on the West Pit bench.

Biodiversity Offsets

Weed control and fence maintenance remain the main management focus at HVO's biodiversity offsets. Andrew provided an overview of what works are being focussed on at Hook, Wandewoi and Mitchelhill West.

Operational Weed Management

HVO's focus has been on Hunter River riparian areas and River Redgum communities. Andrew identified the target weeds and advised that HVO are trialling weed wiping as a more targeted approach in areas where native regrowth is intermixed with weedy species. Brian queried if HVO had encountered any African Boxthorn, he noted there seems to be a lot of this around. Andrew responded that there is some African Boxthorn, however it is not as aggressive as some other weeds in terms of expansion.

Feral Pest Management - Programme of 2024 Activities

Andrew provided an overview of HVO's Wild Dog Control and "Hoggone" Pig Baiting Programs that have been completed. The Winter/Spring Hoggone Program had been brought forward to August in response to sightings and to align with a neighbours concern and trapping program. The next Wild Dog Control Program is planned for November. HVO rural licensee pig control programs are ongoing via bounty payments. The Kangaroo commercial harvests have been impacted by the closure of Jerrys Plains Chiller, to manage growing numbers HVO are applying for a landholder's licence. Andrew queried if there had been any talk of another Chiller for the region, Brian and CR. Sue George responded no.

Heritage

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

Mitchell Pit South AHIP application consultation meetings commenced in March. Test excavation and survey were completed during April. The Mitchell Pit South AHIP was submitted 20 August 2024. The 60 day Heritage NSW assessment is now underway. If the AHIP is approved, HVO will have Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAP's) assist with surface collection, excavation and sub-surface searches. The HVO North Heritage Management Plan and HVO South Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan has been updated and submitted to Heritage NSW and RAPs for feedback.

A Cultural Burn is scheduled for 4 September 2024, Wonnaruah Firesticks Alliance and Bindelong Corp will be supported by HVO's Emergency Response Team. The RFS and neighbouring landholders will be notified. This is the first Cultural Burn that HVO have done and Andrew identified where this will be conducted. Andrew noted that being a significant Cultural site means the area is all hand managed i.e. no machinery. Andrew was positive about trying out a Cultural Burn to clear the understory. Andrew advised the area is in the order of 4 hectares and contained within HVO's site.

Historic Homestead Projects; Includes Archerfield, Carrington Stud and Wandewoi Homesteads.

With the costing of maintenance works complete, HVO are assessing budgeting and timing of works implementation. The initial quotes for restoration works to Wandewoi Homestead parapet have been received and the HVO commercial team are finalising the Scope of Works. Andrew provided a picture of the Wandewoi Homestead, HVO are looking to conduct significant work with the first being the wall at the front of the Homestead. This first stage will be to work towards getting structural defects corrected, then external works will be conducted i.e. waterproofing, then internal. Jeannie queried how these works will be funded and Andrew confirmed they are funded internally. Andrew explained that HVO's obligations are to maintain the property, given the Wandewoi Homestead is still usable and liveable they will continue to focus on that standard.

Yard maintenance works and termite interception system inspections at LEP listed properties remain ongoing. The Dog Leg Fence firebreak maintenance was completed in August.

Dam 15N Pollution Reduction Programme

The Dam 15N expansion completion report was submitted to the EPA on 30 June 2024, this is to effectively double the dam capacity to provide a 1:100 storm water runoff capture from the CHPP area. CR. Sue George queried if HVO are limited on the water they can harvest and Andrew responded that is correct, there are quite complex rules that vary with different types of water. With regard to water off catchments, HVO are required to capture this if polluted.

Reporting, Exceedances and Inspections

As a response to HVO's submission of their EPL Annual Return; upgrade works are in progress in relation to one concern around Sewage Treatments Plants. Andrew confirmed that all water is contained on site from these Treatment Plants.

Andrew provided details of investigations and actions undertaken in relation to a Post Blast Fume Event on 4 June and Mine Water Discharge from the Dam 17N pump station on 22 June 2024. There had been no follow up requested by the DPHI in relation to the blast and there was no actual or potential harm caused in relation to the water incident. Brian queried if blast charges are capped and Andrew responded that is correct, they have stemming on them. The internal investigation found the blast had been impact by approximately 60mm of rain that had occurred following loading and prior to initiation.

The Resources Regulator (RR) visited HVO site and viewed a range of rehabilitation areas on 11 and 12 June in relation to HVO's Revegetation Targeted Assessment Programme. There were no regulatory directives issued however the RR did provide some recommendations to HVO.

Andrew noted a recommendation by the RR was for HVO to consider alternative options for topsoil i.e. compost. Janelle felt that Native Australian Trees may not grow well in compost and Andrew confirmed that a blend of compost and soil has been seen to work well, he noted that sedimentary material does need a blend to assist with the organics. It was agreed that a compost mix does provide a more visually pleasing result.

The EPA visited site on 1 August 2024 in relation to HVO's 5 Year Licence Review. There was a general site inspection including a review of the Dam 17N incident location, an update on the Enforceable Undertaking (East TSF) and the EPA viewed how the Load Point Pollution Reduction Programme works.

Management Plans

Hunter Valley Gliding Club Management Plan; re-submission during April, approved by DPHI and communicated with the Glider Club.

North and South Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plans; have been submitted to Heritage NSW for consultation.

Water Management Plan; revision submitted to agencies for review following Annual Review submission.

Fine Reject Management Strategy; revision submitted to agencies for review following Annual Review submission.

Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan; revision following Annual review submission, in review.

Andrew advised the CCC should they have interest in HVO's Management Plans they are welcome to look at them and provide any input whilst they are being updated. Jeannie commended the HVO document library on the company website, she noted this enables people to go and look at any documents that may be of interest.

Exploration Works

Andrew provided an update on surface exploration, noting the two drill holes planned within EL 5417 and EL 5606 during 2024 have been postponed until 2025. Should further exploration work be required in EL's HVO will conduct consultation with impacted stakeholders. The remainder of surface exploration drilling for 2024 is confined to Mining Leases, with works targeting the Bayswater and Barrett seams.

Approvals - HVO Continuation Project

NSW Approval Update

Jason provided an overview of the status of the HVOCP NSW SSD applications as summarised by:

Project is currently under assessment by the NSW DPPI – 10 RFIs completed to date.

Independent Flooding Assessment Peer Review – completed.

Independent Expert Advisory Panel for Mining (IEAPM) (Water and GHG aspects) - completed.

Noted the report was comprehensive and broadly supports the project approach and studies undertaken on water and emissions developed by HVO to support continued mining.

DPPI has issued a RFI that requests HVO outline any implications of avoiding coal extraction from the mining area referred to as Domain 1. HVO are currently preparing a response to the RFI.

Some other minor RFIs currently being addressed for provision to DPPI.

Jason provided a detailed overview of what the project is subject to and project commitments.

Federal Approval Update

Jason provided an overview of the status of the HVOCP EPBC Act applications as summarised by:

Federal Public Environmental Report (PER) guidelines issued by DCCEEW on 19 March 2024.

PERs for HVO North and HVO South were submitted to the DCCEEW in June 2024.

Project requires consideration by the Independent Expert Scientific Committee (IESC) for water.

EPBC Act Legal Appeal– Hunter Environment Lobby (HEL) represented by the Environmental Defenders Office (EDO).

Jason confirmed that he will advise members if there are any significant developments with regard to the Continuation Project in between the CCC meetings.

Community

Community Grants Program

Round One; HVO provided detail of local organisations that had been successful in obtaining HVO Community Grant Round One Funding, along with an overview of the Proposed Projects and Focus Areas i.e. local/regional need, health, education/training, economic development and environment:-

Singleton PCYC, Mark Hughes Foundation, Singleton Public School, Upper Hunter Homeless, NSW Scout Association, Muswellbrook High School, Rotary Club of Singleton on Hunter, Singleton Neighbourhood Centre, Maitland Tenambit BMX Club, St Catherine's Catholic College, Cessnock City Council, Australian Stock Horse Association, Sandy Hollow Public School, Singleton Public Library, Hunter Valley Camp Draft, Denman Public School and Sunnyfield

Round Two of HVO's Community Grant programme will run between 1 to 30 September 2024. Members were asked to contact Nic McLaughlin should they know of a local organisation that would like to apply.

Actioned Post Meeting 9/9/24; Nic emailed the link to enter HVO's SmartyGrants Application page to the CCC.

HVO Apprentice Programme; The official opening of the new Branxton pre-school play area occurred on 16 June 2024.

Naidoc Week; Celebrations in Cessnock culminated in the Family Fun Day held at Cessnock TAFE on Saturday 13 July 2024. HVO supported this event with a \$2,000 community grant to aid in the costs of Aboriginal dance performers and other expenses.

Singleton Art Prize; HVO's Mine Manager; Dave Mitchell represented HVO and presented the award to the winner.

2024 PCYC Singleton Book Fair

Ron Stokes Book Launch; HVO recently teamed up with Bulga, UWJV, MGO, several businesses and the wider Singleton community to provide funding for the publishing of Ron Stokes book 'A Place in Time – Singleton Co-Operative Dairy Company 1900 - 1988' The book was launched at Club Singleton on Sunday 28 July 2024 and is available for purchase at; Kirkwood's Produce, Singleton Historical Museum, GIO Singleton and Burdekin Park Pharmacy, with all proceeds going to the Singleton Hospital Auxiliary to purchase equipment for the hospital. Brian, Janelle and CR. Sue George advised they all had copies of this book.

Jerrys Plains School of Arts – New Stage curtains; HVO teamed up with MTW, Bulga and UWJV to provide funding for new fire-resistant stage curtains. CR. Sue George advised that the curtains look lovely.

Events sponsored by HVO

- ✓ 2000s exhibit at the Muswellbrook TV and Movie Nostalgia Festival on 6 to 8 September 2024
- ✓ Wildlife exhibit at Our Bushland Festival in Cessnock on Sunday 8 September 2024

Proposed Dates & Venues for HVO's Community Information Sessions

Jerrys Plains – Wednesday 23 October 2024 at Jerrys Plains School of Arts

Maison Dieu – Saturday 26 October 2024 at 880 Maison Dieu Road

HVO encouraged members to suggest any better days or times for these Information Sessions should they receive community feedback. Brian acknowledged it is difficult to find times that suit everyone in the community and it was agreed that Saturday mornings do tend to work well in Maison Dieu.

The Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue 2024 Community Forum will be held on Tuesday 29 October 2024

Further details can be found at <https://miningdialogue.com.au/>

8. Community Representative Feedback

Brian advised of a community member that had expressed interest in joining the HVO CCC and Col confirmed the next step would be for HVO to publish an ad calling for new members.

ACTION 1: HVO to advertise for Expressions of Interest from Community and Stakeholders to join this CCC.

ACTION 2: Col to contact Neville and Di to ascertain their availability to attend future meetings.

Janelle thanked HVO for their prompt response and assistance with her house, stating that was greatly appreciated.

CR. Sue George advised that she hopes to be re-elected as Counsellor at the Singleton Council Elections being held on 14 September 2024 and to continue as Council's representative for the HVO CCC. Col and Andrew thanked CR. Sue George for her contribution to the HVO CCC and all members wished her all the best for the election.

9. General Business

Nic advised that members may be contacted via email to partake in the Glencore three-year community perceptions survey.

Brian thanked Glencore and HVO for the great Family Day, CR. Sue George concurred saying it was an excellent day.

Col thanked all for their attendance and confirmed HVO's next meeting date.

Janelle advised she will be an apology for the November meeting.

10. Next Meeting Date : Wednesday 13 November 2024

1.30 to 3:30pm in HVO's Meeting Room MR1 of the Services Building

Actions Arising from this Meeting

ACTION 1: HVO to advertise for Expressions of Interest from Community and Stakeholders to join this CCC.

ACTION 2: Col to contact Neville and Di to ascertain their availability to attend future meetings.

Updates

- ✓ Continuation Project Quarterly CCC update.
- ✓ North Void Tailings Storage Facility Barrier Wall design when progressed.
- ✓ HVO's European Heritage Management Plan when finalised.

Action Carried Forward

2022 riverbank erosion – DPE Water Section;

Col awaiting staff member to attend a future HVO CCC Meeting.

Last invited 31 May 2023

CONTACTS

Website <https://hvo.com.au/>

Continuation Project via hvo.com.au/continuation

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100086443440525>

Meeting Minutes - <https://www.hvo.com.au/documents/>

HVO Complaints and Blasting Hotline: 1800 888 733 (free call)

SMS Blasting Notification System- Send an SMS to 0447 448 982 with word "subscribe" included in text